# Ten (free!) productivity tools for editors – Part 2 of 2

*Laetitia Sullivan*

Time – something we wish we had more of, yet we all have the same 24 hours per day. So, how to make the best use of them? Hello, productivity tools! These days there is an app or tool for everything, so let's look at some productivity tools that can streamline your work as an editor.

## Text expanders: aText

Do you find yourself typing the same email message over and over again? Or writing the same author query *ad nauseam*? Then aText will become your best friend. Think of this tool as your own personalised form of digital shorthand. You might write the phrases 'Please see attached the requested file' or 'I'll get back to you' or 'Thanks so much' dozens of times a week. Using a shortcut for these phrases will save hours in otherwise lost productivity.

With this app, I use my personal shortcut of '.stq', which stands for 'sworn translation quote', to provide the client with the necessary information (as in the screenshot) without having to type a rather long response. The same goes for author queries while editing, where you can set up shortcuts for often-repeated comments. The app works in most email clients, such as Gmail and Outlook, as well as in the editor's best (or worst!) friend, Microsoft Word.

**Other free text expanders to try:** PhraseExpress, AutoHotkey, espanso.

## PDF conversion: PDF Candy

Still counting words manually in a PDF? Nobody's got time for that! It's useful to know the word count of a PDF when you have to provide a proofreading quote and the client insists on a rate per word. PDF conversion to Microsoft Word also helps when you want to use consistency software such as PerfectIt or macros, as these tools don't work in PDF documents. PDF Candy is one such converter for use in your browser or as a desktop app. As with all free PDF conversion software, there are certain limitations to keep in mind. Although this app contains 44 different PDF tools and even allows for OCR in more than 10 languages, you are limited to the processing of only two tasks every two hours.

Microsoft Word (from the 2016 version onwards) also has the ability to convert PDFs to Word, although it struggles when dealing with a graphic-heavy or especially long document. Automatic word-counting apps, such as CountAnything, Translator's Abacus and abracadabraTools, are other alternatives for getting a quick ballpark word count of your PDF, if conversion is not your main concern.

**Other free PDF converters to try:** iLovePDF, AltoPDFtoWord, PDF2Go.

## Password management: LastPass

With the POPI Act now being a reality for many businesses in South Africa – editors as sole proprietors included – data security and protecting your own information and that of your clients has never been more important. One easy way of protecting unauthorised access to accounts and other documents include using strong password protection. But hands up if you have ever been confronted by a login screen just to scramble around and wrack your brain for that elusive password. Never mind not being able to remember the name of your ex's sister's childhood dog as the answer to a security question!
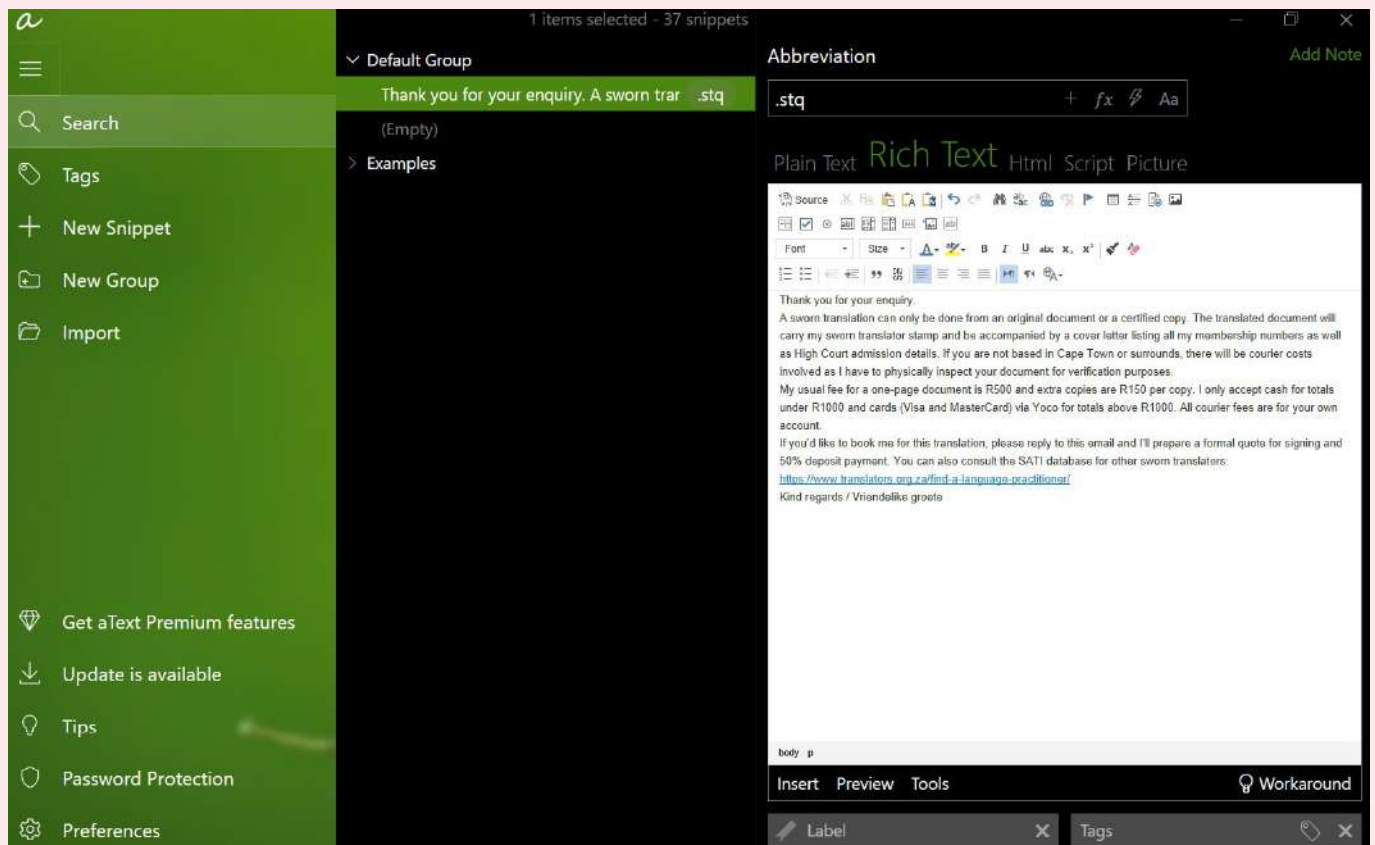
With LastPass, you need to remember only one master password. The app will not only keep all your passwords in a secure vault, but will also generate long, randomised passwords when you want to register a new account online. No need to scratch your head and waste time finding those odd combinations of uppercase and lowercase letters, symbols, numbers and the answer to 'life, the universe and everything'.

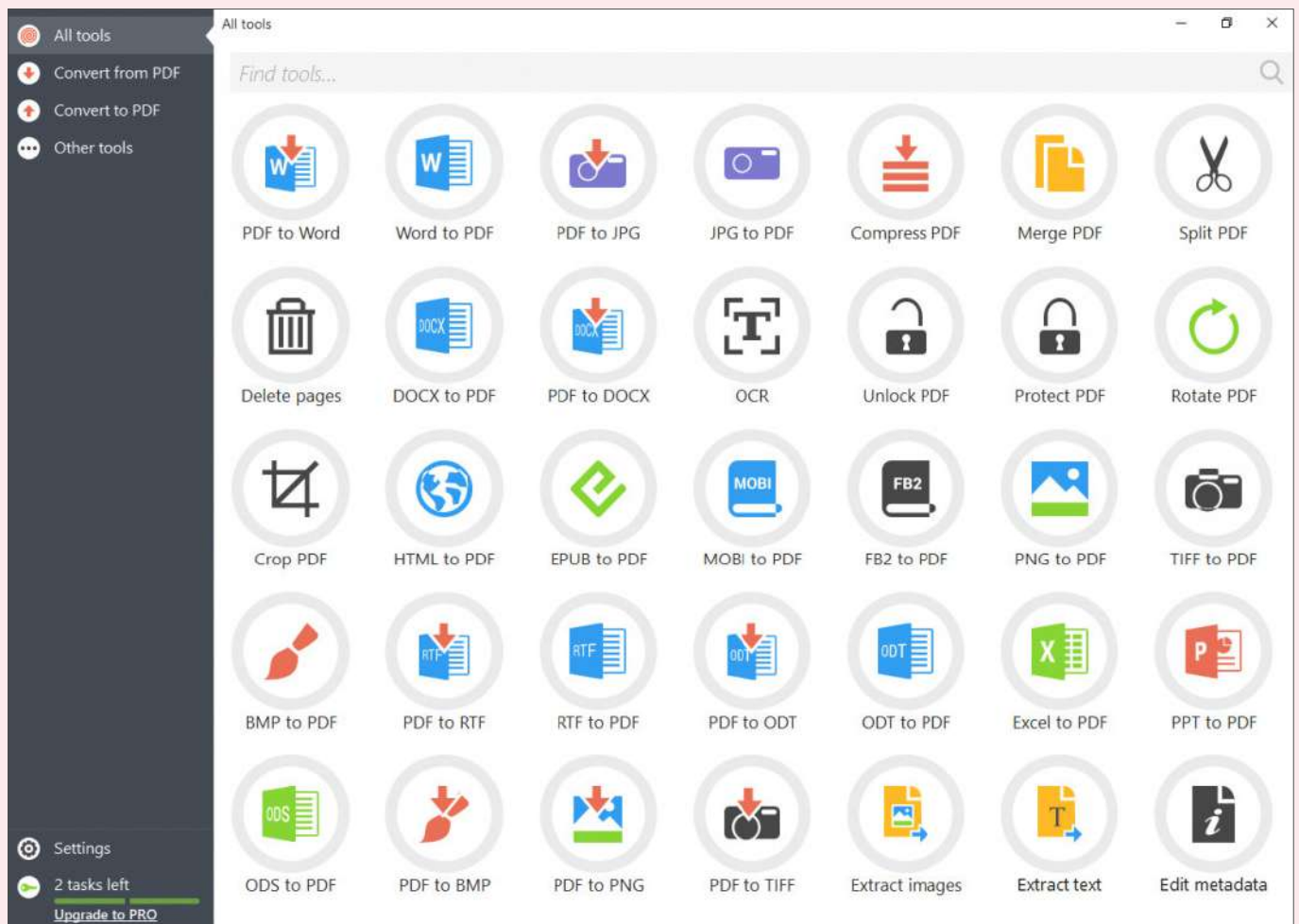**Other free password managers to try:** Bitwarden, LogMeOnce, Dashlane.

## Combatting information overload: Feedly

Just as you might struggle to remember all your passwords if you don't use a password manager, it's hard work these days to try to keep up with the vast ocean of useful information out there, while drowning out the 'noise' of the internet. Using a feed reader or news aggregator to follow specific trade or news publications, blogs, research journals, Reddit communities and even YouTube channels is the closest thing to having the web all in one place. Instead of visiting multiple websites, Feedly allows you to follow up to 100 sources and organise them into three feeds, making it much easier to keep up with your favourite writers, topics or industries.

This app is perfect for editors who want to use it as a research hub or to generate ideas for their own blog or LinkedIn posts, as it also allows for integration with note-taking apps such as Evernote or OneNote. It's also the best option for getting away from algorithm-defined news timelines to curate content you *genuinely* care about. ❯

Never repeat yourself with aText



Make light work of conversion with PDF Candy

Protect what's important with LastPass



Feedly: for news your way



Make getting paid easy with Guild

**Other free news aggregators to try:** Pocket, The Old Reader, NewsBlur.

## Invoicing: Guild

I did the work; now show me the money! We all want to get paid for our editing work, so what's an easy way to set up and send estimates and invoices? Guild is a homegrown South African app that not only serves as a tool for quoting and invoicing, but also offers a job platform where clients can advertise and freelancers can find opportunities. The app, which is currently available only for download on your phone, also has a blog with relevant articles such as 'Don't dig the job? Here's how to politely turn down a freelance gig.'

Some editors find invoicing and the admin side of running a freelance business quite a chore. Using an app to automate these tasks will free up your time to spend on what you *actually* want to do: more editing!

**Other free invoicing apps to try:** Akaunting, Zoho Invoice, Bookipi.

## Making AI work for you

Tracking and managing your time is an intensely personal activity. Some of us, who became editors when dial-up internet was still a thing (or even before that!), tend to shy away from what machines can do for us. But, IMHO, the only way to make any kind of decent living as an editor these days is to invest in digital efficiencies and use as many tools possible to maximise productivity, so that you have sufficient time to work not only *in* your business, but also *on* your business.

Be that brave editor and try some of the tools in this article to see if they make a difference to your productivity as an editor. Just remember the golden rule of any system or tool: Never make anything more complicated than it absolutely has to be, otherwise you won't stick to it! 🌿

## References

Coulson, A 2020 *What's e-new? 21 for 2021*.
https://blog.ciep.uk/whats-e-new-2021

Craiker, K 2020 *Everything you need to know about text expanders, snippets, and shortcuts*.
https://prowritingaid.com/art/1479/a-guide-to-text-expanders-and-text-snippets.aspx

Kashyap, V nd *44 productivity tools that will make your life much easier*. https://www.proofhub.com/articles/best-productivity-tools

Martelli, A 2014 *21 free tools and utilities for translators*. MTM Translations.

Saffrey, A 2020 *How can I be more productive? Part 1*.
https://blog.ciep.uk/productivity-tools-1/

Saffrey, A 2021 *How can I be more productive? Part 2*.
https://blog.ciep.uk/productivity-tools-2/

Whitty, T 2018 *Favorite productivity and organization tools for translators*. https://marketingtipsfortranslators.com/tools

Zetzsche, J 2020 *The translator's tool box: A computer primer for translators*. International Writers' Group

Laetitia is a SATI-accredited sworn translator admitted to the High Court and a bilingual language practitioner with 18 years' experience, mainly in trade and educational publishing. Her loves are tech, pugs, books and wine – mostly at the same time.